

BRAVE LIFE GUARD.

PERILS OF THE WARFARE SURFMEN ENGAGE IN.

They Risk Their Lives to Save Others, but For Them In Time of Danger There Is No Helping Hand—True Tales From the Life Savers' Logbooks.

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THE life of a coast guardman attended with such hardship and danger that society should care for him when no longer able to care for himself. The promoters of the plan now before the country to establish a system of national relief for surfmen who become disabled in the line of duty and for the families of those who sacrifice their lives in behalf of others need not look far for cases to strengthen the claims of this heroic body of men. Scarcely a great wreck takes place that does not leave one or more men worse off than the rescued. Often whole crews of lifeboatmen are sacrificed, and still more frequently some one individual is the victim of a sad calamity brought about by exposure in trying to ward off calamity from fellow men. In writing these stories of heroism we have endeavored to dwell upon the particulars of life saving in the strict sense. But the loss of life among surfers is, alas, too often a necessary part of the story. Usually it comes about by a hopeless attempt to save that which is beyond salvation.

When the Elizabeth from Belfast, Me., went down in the entrance to San Francisco harbor Feb. 21, 1891, with 17 of her crew, the chances of giving help were of the faintest, yet Keeper Charles Henry of Fort Point station lost his own life and imperiled his crew because the traditions of the service are, "Never say fail." The Elizabeth crossed the outer bar in the afternoon with a fresh leading wind. Her captain declined the proffered aid of tugs, declaring that his ship could sail in alone. The tugs attempted to follow the ship, but couldn't keep up. As the seas grew heavier the captain hailed the tug Alert and offered \$25 to tow the ship. The tug Alert asked \$50, and as the Elizabeth was driving rapidly on shore her captain offered to split the difference and make it \$37.50. At last, when the ship was almost on the rocks, he offered \$50, but the tug captain declared he couldn't save her then. Seeing the ship becoming unmanageable, however, he passed a hawser on board. It broke just as he got the Elizabeth headed offshore. Half an hour was passed in getting another line aboard. Meanwhile both vessels had drifted toward Point Bonita. The tide was ebb, and the tug could not make headway with the ship until her sails had been furled and her yards braced back. Unfortunately the hawser again broke, but the tug Reliance was within hail and came to the assistance of the Alert. Before the Reliance could get hold the Elizabeth struck on Four Fathom bank and for the first time hoisted signals of distress. The tug was swept by heavy seas, one of which struck the captain and disabled him. A cutter was lowered, and it immediately swamped, but the people, three in number, were taken on board the Reliance. The dingy was then hoisted out, and the captain's wife, with two children, were transferred to the Reliance. Meanwhile the Elizabeth had pounded over the shoal, losing her keel. She floated, but was leaking badly.

The distress signals when hoisted quickly alarmed Keeper Henry at Fort Point station, who launched the lifeboat without delay. It was blowing a gale, with a choppy sea, so that the surfmen could make little headway with the oars. Fortunately the tug Relief came along outward bound and took the humane craft in tow. Night had set in intensely dark. Both boats shipped heavy seas, but plowed ahead until they reached Point Bonita, when the tug captain advised Keeper Henry to turn about, but the brave fellow declared that he must sail on until he reached the vessel whose signals of distress had been sighted from the lookout. Just at that moment a heavy sea picked up the lifeboat and hurled her under and athwart the bow of the tug. To save her being stove Keeper Henry cut the towline, the crew bent to their oars and only with the severest efforts saved the boat from being driven on the rocks toward which the fierce wind, a strong eddy and the heaving sea carried her. Finally she met with the tug Alert going in from the bar and asking for a tow passed a hawser on board. In the excitement and haste the short piece which had been cut loose from the Relief was used. As soon as the line was fast the tug steamed ahead slowly, but in getting under headway the lifeboat took a broad sheer, filled with water, and when

at the station at 9 o'clock, having broken three oars in the struggle.

The sequel to this itself shows that heroism in the coast guard is not exceptional. The Elizabeth, which had gone into splinters within 45 minutes after she struck, lay off Bonita point. The crew of the Fort Point station joined forces with that of Golden Gate and at 10 o'clock set out through the storm to land whatever aid they could to the wrecked people. The night was so bitter that owners of horses refused to allow them to go out at any price to haul the beach apparatus. So the men themselves were harnessed in traces like animals and dragged the load for hours over heavy rocks to the beach, where they arrived at daylight. After a tedious search a few survivors were found and cared for. Eighteen had perished, victims of their captain's misplaced confidence, if no worse. To this useless sacrifice must be added that of brave Keeper Henry of Fort Point life saving station.

In 1891 also, on the 4th day of June, Keeper William Clark of the Erie life saving station was drowned while attempting with his crew to rescue imperiled people on board the steamer Badger State, stranded in a northeaster off the pier of Erie harbor. There were 38 people, including nine passengers, on board the Badger State. She struck at 2:15 in the morning, and the 8 o'clock beach patrol saw her almost immediately, waved his lantern as a signal to her master and hurried to the station house with the alarm. In a few minutes after his arrival there, or at 8:15, the lifeboat Dobbin was under way to the wreck manned by Keeper Clark and six surfmen. In their haste they failed to don life preservers, although the belts lay on the thwarts of the boat ready for an emergency. The vessel lay on the outer bar 150 or 200 yards from shore. The lifeboat reached her soon after 4 o'clock, for the surfmen had pulled like heroes across the bay, where the water was as yet comparatively smooth. In the lake, however, the water was rough, and the captain of the Badger State, hearing the signals of approaching tugs, preferred to wait for them to pull his vessel off rather than attempt to land his people with the lifeboat. He asked Keeper Clark to lay by and wait events, especially to help get a line from the tugs to the wreck in case the latter came to his assistance. In an hour or more the first tug hove in sight, and a line was passed from the Badger State into Clark's hands, who immediately shouted, "Oars!" and the crew pulled for the tug, then 600 feet away, with a strong lateral current running between. This current bore the line to the leeward with such power that the lifeboat could not get within 40 feet of the tug. By this time both tug and boat had drifted on to dangerous shoals. In the confusion of orders the line was let go and communication with the stranded vessel broken.



ANOTHER TREMENDOUS WAVE ROLLED LENGTHWISE OVER THE BOAT.

ken. Keeper Clark at once turned his boat toward the Badger State, intending to pull back, pick up the line and try again. His course lay with the troughs of the sea, and in a few moments a mighty wave arose alongside the boat, lifting her to its lofty crest, while another struck her, rolling the frail thing completely over. As she went down, Clark called out, "We are going to catch it now!" All hands were held beneath the boat and there clung to her thwarts, expecting that, as usual, she would right herself. In this she failed, but sank deeper and deeper, only her keel remaining submerged. With great skill the surfmen dived from out their prison, and all succeeded in reaching the keel. "We'll have to ride her in this way," exclaimed Clark, who clung to the sternpost, and as each wave would gather and sweep over the narrow raft called to his struggling companions, "Look out!" But warning was useless for himself and the man nearest him when another tremendous wave rolled lengthwise over the boat, striking those at the keel fairly in the chest with awful power, and carried Clark along with it some yards. Being a splendid swimmer, he turned and struck out for shore. Again and again the waves broke over him, but was seen time after time to arise and buffet the strong seas. All at once he disappeared, carried down probably by the weight of his heavy clothing and long rubber boots, which had had time to fill with water.

Seeing their captain down before their eyes had a saddening effect upon the men, but they did not wholly despair. The man who had been washed off with Clark managed to regain his hold. As best they could they signaled to shore for aid. The boat drifted into the breakers, where the ship's yawl, which had put off when the lifeboat capsized, dare not venture. The men succeeded in throwing off their boots and heavy clothing, and as they were torn from their hold by the breakers struggled ashore nearer dead than alive.

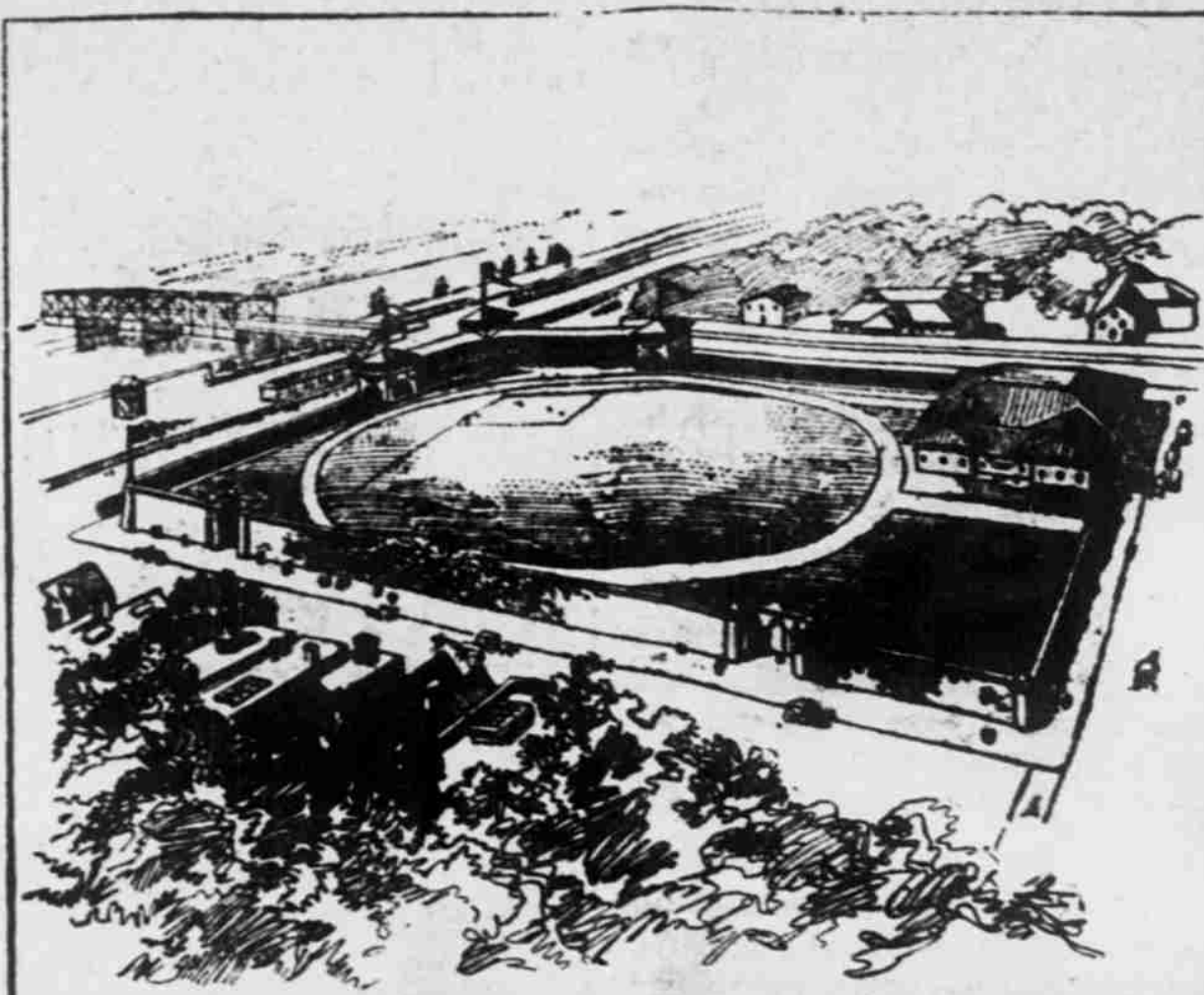
Although the accident occurred in the daytime in the presence of two tugs and of a steamer's crew, with boats at hand, also in sight of people who were seamen on shore, no one among all those spectators, even the most interested, risked his comfort, much more his life, to go to the aid of the imperiled life savers. But for their pluck and skill—skill, by the way, far too rare where it would be supposed to be common, among men who follow the sea, as it proved in almost every wreck—the entire crew would have shared the fate of gallant Keeper Clark.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

How Chinese Burglars Work.

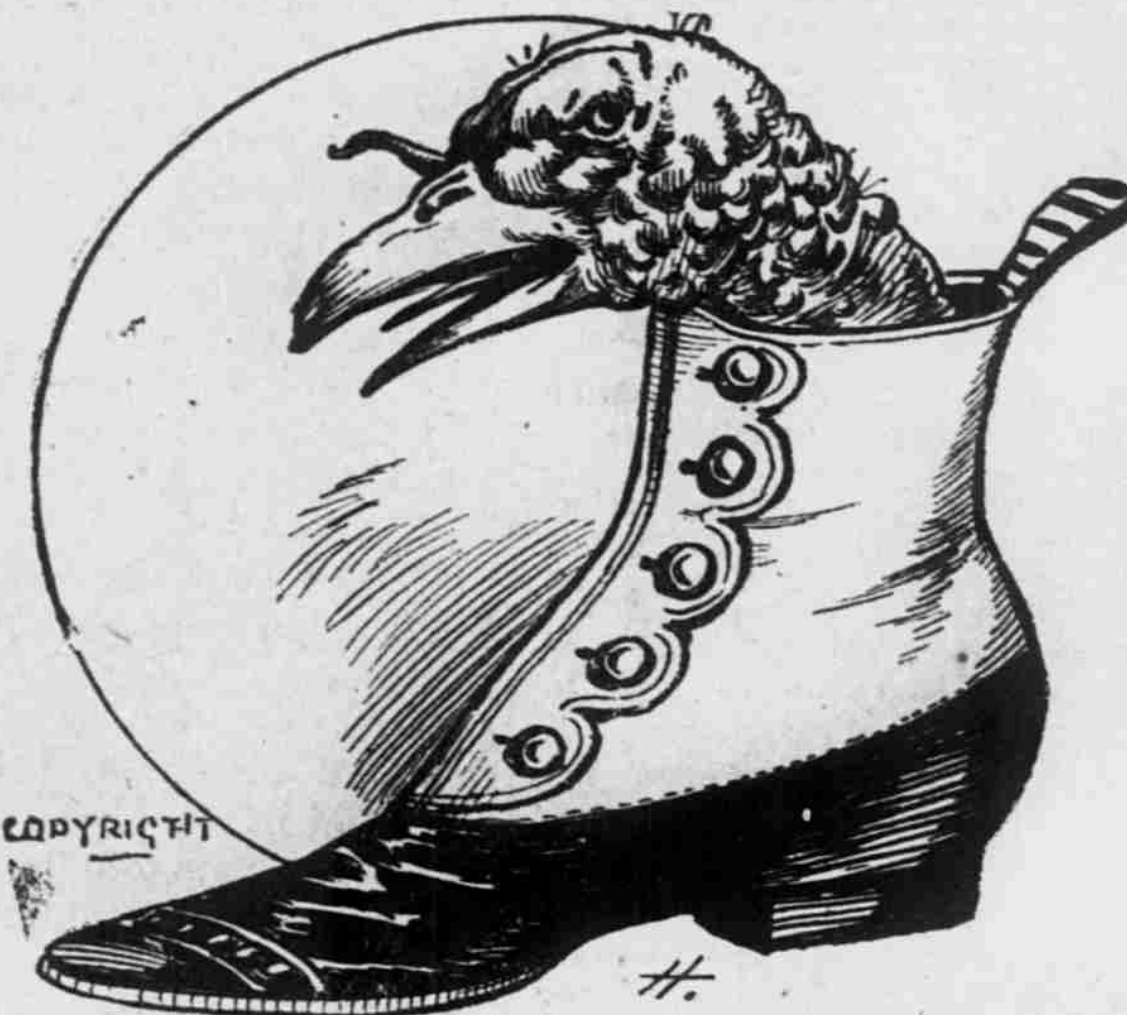
The Chinese burglar takes an ingredient of his own, burns it and blows the smoke through the keyhole of the bedroom where the master of the house is asleep. The fumes dull the senses of the victim just enough to make him helpless, while at the same time permitting him to hear and see everything that goes on in the room. The only antidote against the charm is pure water, and most of the wealthy Chinese folk sleep with a basin of this near their heads.—New York Times.

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